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# Quarters

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## ***The Sleepdancers***

● Peter Viereck

One crunch of fangs is all the thanks I'd get,  
Were I to join the waltz behind their bars.  
I tried to look away; but shan't forget  
This circus dance of sixteen mangy bears.

Their jowls, like good sports in a comic paper,  
Grin their Indignity. Explore that word.  
Your "injured and insulted," here they caper.  
I wish I really thought they were absurd.

And do you think so, snout-chained soul of man,  
You audience whose paws erupt that rumpus?  
You middle-aged and grouchy, gypped of fun.  
You growlers all, inelegantly pompous.

And tell me, do they sleepdance, just like—you?  
Nightly do they keep step, the whole sixteen,  
When on the roof their plumpness teeters through  
The canvas of the carnival-canteen?

Beneath the roof, their Chainer is carousing.  
If he but guessed what bear-hugs overhead  
Flatten the moon they fly to when they're drowsing!  
Suppose they crash? Who shrives bears when they're dead?

Shall cats and curs, that cringed to watch them lope,  
Now dice to divvy and lug home their fat?  
If I'm around, I'll put a stop to that.  
I'll honor gaucheness anywhere I find it

And the deep sadness of a shaggy hope.

# The Willoughby Water Circus

• Richard W. O'Brien

EVEREND THADDEUS BENSON approached the base of the marble pulpit with slow, deliberate steps—as if he really didn't want to get there. With the classic resignation of a doomed man at the scaffold, he ascended and solemnly surveyed his assembled flock. Though his manner suggested that he had a monopoly on local misery, I knew he would be generously sharing it with the entire congregation before long.

While he was rallying himself for our ordeal, I toyed with the idea of getting a double dose of preaching on rainy Sundays, so that we might be spared on balmy summer mornings like this one. Days like today were made for fishing up in Lake Harper, or a round of golf over at the club. Probably Ben Chandler is on the back nine by now; never did go to church after his wife died.

Reverend Benson was swinging into high gear already. He began by bellowing out a call for "worthy pilots to navigate the stormy sea of life . . ." Now there was a way to spend a breezy summer day; sailing out in the Sound, with nothing to disturb you but the occasional flapping of sea gulls' wings as they glided in effortless spirals around the mast. Get a girl to pack a lunch, a case of beer, and let the wind take you from there.

Old T.B. shattered my sailboat picnic with a verbal bombardment

of the bad ship Vice and those of us who man her guns. He was still on the nautical kick, raising hell with the devil, in every salt water phrase this side of Davy Jones's locker. His tone mellowed as he described the "Haven of Hereafter," with its placid harbor that welcomes the captains of goodness and swamps all vessels of iniquity. I wondered if the harbor would be crowded—like Norfolk on a Saturday afternoon. I suppressed a smile as I thought of another harbor on another Sunday, years before. There was a small troopship out in the stinking hot islands during the last summer of the war, and I was a private-no-class in the Marine Corps. The old scow was ridiculously overcrowded, the food was abominable, and we were on water discipline most of the time, but the pinochle games were nice.

It was the end of another sultry day on board the U.S.S. Willoughby, A.P.A. two-oh-something or other, anchored out in Manila Bay. Colors were down and the fading daylight had sent the letter writers and card players below, while the dreamers and baloney merchants gathered in small clusters on the peeling grey deck. They all wore their faded green dungarees, but since I had guard duty, I was in khaki, with a duty belt and a billy stick. The four companies of the Battalion took turns supplying the

guard, which was composed of about twelve posts around the perimeter of the open deck, and a couple down below with the cargo. The idea was to maintain order and keep the troops away from the life lines, so they wouldn't fall overboard. The Sergeant of the Guard came around once in awhile to check, but for the most part it was a rather informal setup—for the Marine Corps, anyway. Generally when you had the guard, some of your friends would wander over to your post and shoot the breeze with you to make the time go faster.

This particular evening was different, though. I was standing the four to eight watch on the forward boat deck, and there seemed to be even less activity than usual. There wasn't a suggestion of a breeze, and it was the first time I ever knew that ship to sit motionless in the water. (The crew always said it would roll in a bathtub.) I stood by the yawning mouth of a ventilator until the sweet smell of baking bread from the galley made me wonder if I had been to garbage that night. I walked to the other end of my post, where the faint tinkle of ice against glass, coming from Officers' Country, was slightly more tantalizing. Even my loquacious friend, Eddie—who had the adjoining post on the port side—was off his feed. We stood beside the forecastle ladder where our posts met, but all he said was that he was thirsty enough to chug a barrel of beer. Our restless feeling must have been contagious, for I noticed that everyone else on deck seemed to be shifting around uneasily, as if they were itchy. There was a group of

four fellows from another company who were sprawled out in a loose semicircle near the starboard rail. I didn't know them, but I had seen them before—in the slop-chute back at Pearl Harbor—especially the tall corporal from Brooklyn who was forever running his mouth. I hadn't been paying much attention while he told what a terrific swimmer he was, but when he said something about jumping overboard and swimming to Manila, I perked up considerably. The others were totally unimpressed and the dark, serious boy on his left said, "You wouldn't have the guts to jump, Dudley, even if you could swim that far."

"The hell I wouldn't!"

"Yo, Dudley. It's warm enough already without you blowing hot air," chimed in the stocky one on his right.

Dudley's face got as red as his crew-cut hair. "What d'ja wanta bet, Polack?" he challenged.

"Who are you trying to kid, Red?" sneered the dark one called the Greek.

"Put your money where your mouth is!"

"Twenty bucks says you're chicken," taunted the stocky one, taking out his wallet.

"I said money, sonny boy," scoffed Dudley. "Something like half a hundred."

I figured he was safe there. Nobody had that much dough after that last liberty in Pearl.

The Greek rolled over and went for his pocket.

"I got a fin here," he said, "and I'm good for the rest on payday."

"Oh, no," said the redhead deci-

sively, "that's a long way off. I want it where I can see it."

None of the others said anything, and the old arrogance came back into Dudley's voice.

"You thought I wouldn't do it, didn't you? Now you know damn well I would of. Someday I'm going to send for my scrap book, and then you guys—"

"Get your shoes off, Dudley." The flat command came from the fourth man, who had his wallet out and was counting off two tens and a five. I later heard he was saving to get married and hadn't gone ashore for months. Dudley stared at the pile of money and the other three stared at him, while I stood a few yards away taking in everything. The main change in Dudley was the shape of his mouth. His jaw had sagged unconsciously, and his lips formed a circle so that it looked like he was out of breath. The former cynical twist had vanished; he could see nothing satirical about the situation, for clearly, he was the goat.

The stocky one looked at him contemptuously, while the Greek was genuinely amused by the sudden turn of events. The financier of Dudley's plight glared at him so maliciously that I suspected his wrath had been building up for a long time. The corporal leaned over the unsteady life lines and looked at the dark water far below. It was actually about the distance of a three-story building but it must have seemed as high as the Statue of Liberty to him, because the color drained from his face until the fre-

kles on his cheeks stood out like nails on a new floor. He looked around at them accusingly, as if they were pirates about to make him walk the plank at swordpoint, when actually the only compulsion for him to jump came from within himself—the fierce pride of a vain man. Then, for the first time, he was aware of my presence, and the spark of hope flared again. He forced a smile and said, "That guard there heard everything. What the hell, I'd get court-martialed before my clothes were dry if they knew I jumped. Otherwise, I would."

Any trace of compassion I had for the slob was throttled by his tone of voice in that last phrase, "Otherwise, I would." Someday that rodomontade might get him killed, but tonight—if I could help it—it was sure as hell going to get him wet. I moved closer.

"I didn't hear a word, Red; not a blessed word." Then I flashed my Sunday sneer for him.

"Can we have your word on that?" asked the money man.

"Absolutely," I answered.

I actually thought Dudley was going to spring at me, the way he sat and glared, but then the Greek broke the tension. "You can climb up the anchor chain and come in through the winch room. If you get that far, we'll bring some dry clothes down to you. I was down there on a working party last week."

Dudley's eyes had never left me. "Will you give me a chance to make it?" he asked.

"If you don't make any noise," I said. Then I added significantly,

"There's somebody climbing on the superstructure over there. I'm going over to chase him off."

As I left, he picked up the money and began untying his shoes. Dusk had fallen by now, and lights from the other ships and the shore were blinking—as if the whole horizon was a mammoth switchboard. There were perhaps a dozen Marines left on the deck, and two swabbies up on the forecastle, none of them aware of what went on.

The sound of the splash was so remote that I scarcely believed he had jumped, but when I looked back there were only three of them, casually standing by the rail. I made a production out of chasing the man from the superstructure, for that was going to be my alibi if this thing exploded.

"Hey, gooney-bird, get the hell off that turret!"

Everybody on deck looked up and the guy jumped down from the turret. He was a hairy old sergeant, the kind of monster I wouldn't go out of my way to antagonize normally, but he was a friend in need just then.

"Think you're pretty salty with that duty belt on, don't you?" growled my friend who didn't know he was my friend.

"Go on, boot, shove off before I pull my time on you," I said bravely.

"Boot?" he sputtered, "I got more time in the pay line than you got on your hitch!"

"Beat it," I said, "or you'll have more brig time than—" Suddenly an ungodly scream shattered the tranquillity of the night, and then a

loud SPLAT, like a fat man's racing dive.

I ran to the rail and heard one of the trio say, "He slipped off the anchor chain!"

"MAN OVERBOARD," I belowed, "ON THE STARBOARD SIDE!" just like they do in the movies.

The drowsy ship came to life. Troops passed out of the hold in all stages of undress. I guess they thought it was "abandon ship."

"Corporal of the Guard! Post number five!" I yelled, but it was lost in the din.

Then the loudspeaker boomed: "NOW HEAR THIS! Man overboard on the starboard bow. Rescue teams to your stations. Boat crew one-able lower a boat over the starboard side."

The redhead was thrashing around in the water, dodging the life preservers that were being tossed at him from all angles. They threw over everything but the sixteen-man rafts, and soon the water was so littered it was hard to pick out Dudley. Then some overgrown simp started babbling, "My buddy can't swim," and began pulling off his jacket. It took about eight guys to hold the hero back, and another Bronze Star was lost forever. The life lines were straining against the weight of the troops pressing forward to watch the rescue. It was useless to try to push them back, so I just held on to a waist-high stanchion for dear life. Then the Sergeant of the Guard arrived. This little tub of lard came barreling through the crowd like an All-Amer-

ican fullback, shouting: "Make way for the Guard, you bonehead recruits!"

The shock of his impact passed through the crowd like the shadow of an airplane and drove us into the flimsy lines of the life ropes. Three guys grabbed at me desperately and I thought my arms would come out of the sockets. Such a run of profanity I hope never to hear again. The top rope suddenly snapped and another Marine abandoned ship. This one was better dressed for the occasion, as he had come topside with only his green skivvies and a camera. When the jolt came, he was leaning way out, with both hands on the camera, getting that "picture of a lifetime." I distinctly heard two brand new obscenities as he was leaving our company. Now the bombardment of life preservers began in earnest. The supply officer was on the bridge shrieking like a maniac, but the salvo went on—it seemed the troops couldn't do enough for their floundering comrades.

Before the rescue boat could be unfastened and lowered, the gangway was dropped and the aquatic pair swam through the maze of life jackets to the foot of the steps. The bo'sun didn't pipe them aboard, but the guard came out in full strength to receive them as they sloshed onto the deck. The loudspeaker boomed: "NOW HEAR THIS: Boat crew one-able, secure your boat. Fox Company: send a working party to clean out the brig." And then as a sarcastic afterthought: "Marine O. D.: lay up to the bridge immediately."

The inevitable scuttlebutt covered the ship like an early morning fog. I was trying to peddle the fable that he had fallen over accidentally, but word got around that he had jumped on a bet—for a sum that was jacked up to three hundred dollars by the time I heard it. Some of my Fox Company buddies came up to rib me about my impending fate, but they left in a rush when they heard that there was fresh water in the troop showers. My boy Eddie came over to the end of his post and tried to cheer me up as true friends will. He promised that if the ship sank while I was chained in the brig, he would go back and marry my girl and name the first son Dudley. "And if it don't sink, we'll visit you in the Naval Prison twice a year, 'cause Portsmouth ain't a stone's throw from where I live in Mass."

All this time, I had been listening with no more than a tolerant grin, but then a big smile enveloped my face as I noticed what was going on behind Eddie's back. The naval medical corpsman who was attached to George Company was the center of a sizeable group which was obviously goading him into something or other. He had a notorious habit of sampling the sick-bay brandy, and from the looks of him he must have appropriated every ounce on board. At first I thought they wanted him to sing a solo—it sounded like they were requesting *Swanee*—but when he staggered over to the wide gunwale and mounted it unsteadily, I figured the second part of the aquacade was about to commence. Eddie was still blissfully oblivious, thinking it was his own wit that

was convulsing me. The act was too good to miss, so I spun him around and pointed to the rail just as the tipsy corpsman threw a last kiss to the cheering crowd, flapped his arms wildly, and vaulted off into the semi-darkness. It was the most beautiful swan dive ever executed from a troop ship in Manila Bay. I stopped laughing long enough to suggest that we'd probably get a cell together in Portsmouth. Eddie turned into a wild man. Four times he screamed, "Man overboard, starboard side!" and when someone told him it was the port, he yelled, "Man over on the port!" twice as loud. The bridge looked like an anthill before a rainstorm. By now it was too dark to see very far, and they couldn't be sure which side it was, so they took a chance on starboard.

The loudspeaker blared viciously: "NOW HEAR THIS: Man overboard on the starboard. Rescue teams to your stations. Boat crew one-able, put a boat over the starboard." Then another voice, even more agitated, "NOW HEAR THIS: All marines lay below to your compartments on the double! ON THE DOUBLE!"

The corpsman must have sobered instantly when he hit the water, because his mind was already in high gear when he bobbed to the surface. With four strokes, he reached the dangling Jacob's ladder and scrambled up even before the loudspeaker sounded. When he got to the lowest deck, he climbed over the rail, ripped off his dripping clothes, and hurled them, one after the other, back into the sea. Then, absolutely

naked, he sprinted down the deck, and turned into the passageway that led to the troop shower room. A minute later, when the Sergeant of the Guard and the Marine O. D. burst into the steaming room, they saw thirty-five wet, soapy bodies jostling around under the showers. The young lieutenant, who had sailed the Severn seas and knew a thing or two about Quantico, demanded that the culprit come forth. They dropped their soap and stared blankly. Not a soul moved. When the steam began to wilt his hard starched khaki, he started swearing like a true salt. Still nothing happened except that one man came to attention. Finally, he ordered the Sergeant of the Guard to keep everyone there and let no one else enter while he was gone, and stalked out. He found that it was Easy Company's shower, so he went down to their compartment and located the First Sergeant of that outfit. They went back to the shower room, and one by one, the "top" picked out his men until there was just one forlorn, dripping figure in the corner. They threw him a towel and marched him off to the brig.

By now, the deck was serene and deserted, leaving no indication of the antecedent chaos. I stayed away from Eddie because he had been cussing me violently for letting the thing happen. A solitary figure came belligerently across the deck toward me, and he was practically chin to chin with me before I recognized him as the ship's captain. I think I saluted, but at any rate, he didn't return it. His eyes flashed like welding torches and

mesmerized me in the same way. His face was as wrinkled and battered as an old catcher's mitt I once had. Then he spoke:

"Listen, boy! I'm drawing an imaginary line six feet in from the life lines; if anyone so much as puts a finger over that line"—and he

waved his little finger under my nose—"you're going to ship over in the brig!"

" . . . in the brig of Hell's damnation!" the Reverend Benson intoned heavily, his words rebounding from the bulkheads. I mean, the walls.

## ***White Blouses Fading***

• David J. Kelly

Pine tree black on pale green jade,  
Footfalls and yielding bricks.  
Fountain sprays of memories  
Rise and fall back into the dark pool,  
Whispering ephemeral suggestions.

The children run white-bloused and shouting,  
Swift spectres in the velvet dark,  
Pursuing the lusty spirit of the night,  
Stopping now by the yellowed candy store window  
Where the grey face smiles  
And the fat finger beckons behind the cool glass.

They enter shouting and exit laughing,  
Laughing gumdrop laughter,  
Beginning to forget pursuit.  
They stand grouped and then leave one by one,  
White blouses fading, beginning to forget.

The blind trees renew ancient anticipation,  
The earth is damp with love  
And limbo claims unbaptized dreams.

# In the Name of Diplomacy

• C. Richard Cleary

T IS NO EXAGGERATION to state that the fate of Christian civilization now hangs decisively upon the course of American diplomacy; and the fate of American diplomacy depends in turn upon the course of relations between the Congress and the President. The events of the past three decades signalled the end of the long era in which America enjoyed relative immunity from the harsh consequences of its diplomatic blunders; and, balancing the magnitude of America's present world responsibilities against the ineptitude of her past performance, it is indeed sobering to reflect that any foreign policy, no matter how brilliant or desirable it may seem, will prove impracticable, unless it is accepted, not only by America's Allies but also by the people themselves and by the legislative branch of the Government, which, under the Constitution, shares with the executive branch power and responsibility for final action.

During the '20's the American people rejected the responsibilities that history had thrust upon them and, during the fateful '30's, a deluded Congress, eagerly responding to the whims of a misguided public opinion, foisted a disastrously unrealistic policy of "permanent" neutrality upon the nation. This policy was diametrically opposed in its basic concept to the discriminatory arms embargo program which the executive branch had advocated since 1932.

Prior to the outbreak of World War II, President Roosevelt was unable to alter the rigid pattern of foreign policy that Congress had imposed, though the discriminating manner in which he invoked and applied the provisions of neutrality legislation (or declined to do so) clearly revealed the basic disparity between Executive and Legislative views. As the crisis in Europe deepened between 1935 and 1937, the Administration undertook a systematic educational campaign to sway public opinion away from isolationism; it was evident that, however great the power and influence of his office, the President could not compel an unwilling people to accept an unwanted foreign policy. Even the educational approach to the problem of foreign policy was fraught with political peril and required an incredible amount of cautious circumspection on the part of the Administration. A momentary lapse into relative candor, such as in the Quarantine Speech, would raise the hackles of public resentment against Presidential policy. Education, moreover, is a long process, and the course of international events would not await its completion. In any case, it did not yield sufficient results to disencumber American foreign policy from the legislative shackles that had been imposed upon it by the representatives of the people. Prior to World War II President Roosevelt had to resort to constitutional shortcuts in order to do what had to be done. The

sequence of steps by which the United States became committed to the defense of its own vital interests was composed almost entirely of Executive *faits accomplis*.

There would seem to be an element of truth in the contention of hostile critics that the President led us into war and that, in so doing, he employed a certain amount of "deception." If it is true that Roosevelt almost singlehandedly placed America in a position where it was committed to an Allied victory, it is also abundantly evident that he believed that it would be impossible to defend "America first" (or last, or at all) unless the Axis were defeated *in Europe*. The American nation, by virtue of its historic act of adherence to the North Atlantic Pact, has now formally adopted the strategic concept that dictated Roosevelt's course of action. If this concept has any validity, it would follow that President Roosevelt, in taking the various steps that allegedly led into war, was doing no more than what had to be done to defeat the enemies of America, and of humanity itself. And if this is so, future generations will be grateful to him for this—just as they were to Lincoln, who also "led us into war."

While there can be little doubt but that the post-war foreign policies of the American Congress and people have "legitimated" Roosevelt's strategic concept, it is rather more difficult to forecast the final verdict of history with regard to what has been described as the "deception" employed by the President. However this may be, a close scrutiny of the accusation suggests that it is not as damaging as the accusers generally seem to suppose. The latter often seem to ignore the international power realities with which Roosevelt had to deal, and to minimize, where they do not condone, the domestic forces against which he had to contend: the purblind isolationism of public opinion, the extraordinary folly of which culminated in the enactment of storm-cellular neutrality; the prejudiced intransigence of a Congress which insisted upon assuring Hitler that if he went to war it would be "illegal" for America to assist his victims, or even accord them the amenities normally expected by a belligerent of a neutral. It was legislatively proclaimed, moreover, that the United States was determined to avoid conflict at all costs, short of foreign conquest of national domain.

In opposing these forces the President was compelled to ride ". . . the mismated horses of intervention and non-intervention . . ." (Bailey, *The Man on the Street*, p. 175), and with all deference to Mr. Roosevelt's dexterity, such a feat could not be undertaken without anomalies, ambiguities, and inconsistencies on the part of the performer. It is easy to say that Roosevelt should have adopted a position of open, defiant opposition to the currents of Congressional neutralism, but in times of crisis the dangers of such a course are so great that the Executive ". . . is strongly tempted to resort to deception rather than defiance" (Bailey, p. 11). Unable to sway Congress directly on the foreign policy issue, President Roosevelt seemed ready to force the issue late in 1937, only to be repulsed by a nation that would not—and could not—be forced.

During the more than two years of war that raged abroad prior to Pearl Harbor, the American people and Congress virtually demanded to be deceived as a *conditio sine qua non* for their own defense. In 1939, rather than concede that neutrality legislation had failed and should be scrapped, they replaced it with what has been correctly described as "phony neutrality" (Langer and Gleason, *The Challenge to Isolationism*, p. 235). After having erected legal barriers against the transfer of warships, Congress substantially endorsed the destroyer transfer that the President had straight-away proceeded to negotiate in secrecy. The self-deception which most Americans practiced upon themselves with regard to the Destroyer Deal and its implications must have been especially galling to critics who, for almost a decade, had liberally indulged in bitter denunciation of the constitutional impropriety of Mr. Roosevelt's conduct; now, confronted for perhaps the first time with an Executive act of dubious if not downright spurious legality, they were for the most part obliged to concede its essential soundness. The enactment of Lend-Lease in 1941 was also shielded by a cloak of more or less willing self-deception. A majority in both houses of Congress either passed over in silence or professed to deny the quite evident and very far-reaching implications of this measure; it was almost certain to lead to convoying; which, in turn, would almost certainly lead to overt hostilities. Though it may be doubted that everyone who supported this measure was adequately aware of its probable consequences, it would transcend human credulity to suppose that there were not many who were quite cognizant of the consequences they professed to ignore; for the refusal of Congress to modify neutrality legislation prior to 1939 had been based precisely upon such probable consequences as these. And there was every indication at the time that the Lend-Lease bill would have been defeated if its sponsors had ventured to voice the harsh truth.

In short, so firm and enduring was the national will to self-deception that to attribute this phenomena primarily to President Roosevelt's duplicity is to endow him, most implausibly, with preternatural hypnotic power that he did not possess. In point of fact, the President's powers of persuasion, while undoubtedly of a high order, proved unequal to the task of convincing the nation of the dangers of isolation: that is, of convincing the nation to act in time to avert the war.

After the fall of France, Roosevelt was determined to use almost any means ". . . to awaken the American people to the perils that beset them" (Bailey, p. 285). After Lend-Lease had been enacted, the President lost little time in issuing a quiet order for the convoying of goods for Britain; overt incidents with German submarines followed in due course—especially after these occurrences had been expedited by orders to shoot on sight. In this connection there was certainly a species of deception in Roosevelt's use of the term "piratical" to characterize German submarine activities, and his use of the phrase "Freedom of the Seas" to justify the activities of the American Navy in the Atlantic. These tortured interpretations of tradi-

tional international law, and of a time-honored American policy, were preposterously irrelevant to the realities of the situation.

Such was the pattern of deception that embroidered Roosevelt's policy toward the belligerents during the twenty-seven months that elapsed before America's formal declaration of war. It is indeed difficult to conceive how so tenuous and transparent an embroidery could have deceived anyone—anyone, that is, who was not determined to be deceived. President Roosevelt's foreign policy was pellucidly clear to every foreign government, friend and foe alike. Axis leaders were scarcely ever in doubt as to what Roosevelt *would do*; their only miscalculation was as to how he *could do*, and how soon.

Only the cynic, the man of superficial shrewdness, the short-sighted man of clear vision, will endorse deceit of any kind; the present writer is far from believing that it may be justified even as a means to a noble end. It is to be regretted, therefore, that Roosevelt found it expedient to embellish his policy with deception of any kind or degree. It is only just to add, however, that the nature and degree of the President's culpability in this regard has been grotesquely magnified and distorted by critics who refuse to recognize that the Rooseveltian pattern of deception was an expedient makeshift, engrafted temporarily upon the master-pattern of self-deception which the American people and Congress practiced upon themselves. The deception was both long-standing and deep-rooted; it had dominated American foreign policy for more than two decades; it was the dominant domestic force against which Roosevelt's diplomacy had to contend; in the end, in order to overcome it, he exploited it.

Largely as a consequence of the decisive commitments made by the Roosevelt Administration, the particular misconceptions that dominated the pre-war period have passed, for the most part, into the dust heap of discredited and discarded ideas. The delusion of neutralism has been rejected. The spurious constitutional issue of Congressional vs. Executive powers, though still recurrent and potent, has sufficiently abated, for the present, to permit questions of foreign policy to be deliberated on their merits. There seems little likelihood, moreover, that America will soon duplicate the specific blunders of the '30's.

But long-range, general characteristics of national behavior respecting the formulation and conduct of foreign policy are not so easily altered as are specific, short-term policies. The concrete aberrations of the '30's were formed and nurtured in a matrix of ideas and attitudes of a much more fundamental order—a matrix of myth and misconception whose fecundity is by no means exhausted. The American scene still abounds in new versions of the old errors from which stemmed the confusion, impotence and disaster of the '30's and '40's, the shocking sense of insecurity and recrimination of the '50's. It may be questioned whether America will survive the terrible convulsions of the twentieth century if the people should succumb to the political opiate of attributing every past disaster

to the wiles of foreign influence. It is indeed difficult to conceive how America can successfully accomplish the mission of world leadership until the people have recognized that its own "native-born" shortcomings have contributed to the tragedy of our times; or, at very least, until the nation has abjured the mental aberrations that have shaped our foreign policy in the present century—the attitudes that culminated in virtual national paralysis.

While it is beyond the scope of this article to present a complete catalogue and analysis of the ideological, psychological and institutional forces that contributed indirectly to the shaping of America's disastrous experience with neutrality, a few of the more pervasive and enduring factors should be noted.

One of the most disarming of these indigenous factors is the "moralistic" interpretation of foreign policy. It is generally accompanied by an apparently innocuous and most congenial companion: the purely juridical concept of international law and order—the notion of an abstractly conceived international legal order, under which the rights and wrongs of every question would be determined more or less automatically. The "moralistic" viewpoint is altogether superior to such small-minded considerations as the probable practical consequences of any action (or inaction) it might advocate. It is mainly concerned with the chastisement of "wrong-doing" nations—e.g., nations that are not "peace-loving"; it is loath to employ any weapon that is spiritually inferior to moral castigation and moral force. Only recently General Franco and President Peron suffered, under these rods of righteous wrath, the fullest measure of retribution that can be applied with such implements, and both seem to have emerged from the ordeal unrepentant. The conjunction of the "moralistic" with the "juridical" approach probably passed the apogee of its influence with American adherence to the Kellogg-Briand Pact, but both remain formidable. The profound sense of moral outrage resulting from European debt default was probably the most important single force behind neutrality legislation. President Roosevelt, curiously enough, later exploited with some success basically the same moralistic approach in order to undermine the concept of neutrality which it had partly engendered. But certain negative results must also be reckoned among the net achievements of the Hull-Roosevelt application of moralistic levers to pry up the roof of this statutory storm-cellars. This approach did not adequately illuminate the public mind as to the geographical, strategic, military and economic bases of Roosevelt's pro-Allied policy; and without an understanding of these basic considerations, there can be no long-range foreign policy. It is not necessary to conclude, however, that Roosevelt would not have succeeded in such a program of mass re-education had he been accorded sufficient time and leisure for this undertaking. More than four terms might well be required for so formidable a project! In the circumstances, only a bare beginning could be made.

Closely akin to the "moralistic" approach, and equally disarming, is the ingrained and pervasive "democratic idealism" of the American people. Deep-rooted sympathy for the democratic ideal has long been a potent force in American politics. This impulse explained the precipitancy with which recognition was accorded to the Second French Republic in 1848; it helped catapult the nation into war with Spain in 1898; it abetted America's entry into World War I, and succeeded in transforming that senseless conflict into a holy war against autocracy, a crusade to make the world safe for Democracy; though idealism had genuine relevancy to the issues of World War II, it irrelevantly succeeded (in fact, it insisted) in discovering that our powerful Soviet ally was, after all (or had suddenly become) a "peace-loving, democratic nation," and by this self-deception cultivated and multiplied an utterly unnecessary harvest of bitter disillusion. The impulse of "democratic idealism" seems to thrive on the frustration of its aspirations. In any case it still survives with almost undiminished *élan*; it can induce widespread though ill-founded optimism regarding the future course of Germany and Japan on grounds no less tenuous than the transformation of these erstwhile "dictatorships" into "democracies"; it can propel the Government into an utterly pointless and unprofitable disruption of relations with Spain; it can still delude many into supposing that our Western Hemispheric relations are necessarily more vital than the connection with Europe, on the grounds of an alleged affinity of republican governmental structure between the United States and the Latin American nations; it can inflame sentiment and poison relations with Argentina—on the ostensible basis that tyranny, dictatorship or paternalism are more grievous in that country than in such highly esteemed Hispanic-American "democracies" as, say, Haiti, Panama, Bolivia, or the Dominican Republic!

The "economic" interpretation of foreign policy, and the "devil theory" of history, have also exercised a baneful influence in the shaping of American foreign policy. (Undiluted economic determinism, such as the self-styled "scientific" determinism of the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist system, has not established any viable roots in America, and has no appreciable positive influence. Curiously enough, the prevailing American versions of the "economic-devil-theory" seem to enjoy their greatest vogue among convinced believers in the unrivaled virtues of Capitalism—a striking contrast to the European pattern. Generally speaking—and also in contrast with the European scene—Americans appear to be quite impervious to philosophically derived *weltanschauungen*, or to any political or economic theory that is intellectually complex or subtle.) Between the two world wars the "economic" interpretation achieved its greatest popular expression in a form which can best be described as the "Wall Street Syndrome." Briefly stated, this was the notion that trade and finance—in a word, the profit motive—provided the master-key to all political phenomena; and this belief united with the "devil theory" to form a true marriage of false ideas,

from which issued the "Wall Street Demon" interpretation of foreign policy. This idea, which might also be termed the "blood-stained-profits" bromide, came to exercise a profound influence over the average man on the street in the 1930's. After it had been popularly canonized as the definitive explanation of our entanglement in World War I, this idea became the conceptual basis for the statutory neutrality that strangled American diplomacy.

These particular forms of the "economic" and "devil" interpretations were among the casualties of the war and, after five years of the current "cold war," there are relatively few Americans who interpret our policy towards Russia purely in terms of the profit motive. Yet, a current adaptation of the same basic mentality may in part explain why the typical man on the street regards the profound crisis of Soviet-Western relations as mainly a matter of contending economic systems; his demeanor, though resolutely opposed to communism, too often seems to suggest that he views the stakes as nothing more than the survival of a particular method of production and distribution, and believes that the adversary and his ideology can be cowed into submission by a dazzling display of the abundance and superiority of American white-wall tires and household appliances.

The enduring vitality of the "economic" interpretation of American foreign policy may yet lead to disaster; its adherents seem quite unaware of any incongruity as between this fundamentally materialistic approach, on the one hand, and the "idealism" and "moralism" which they also espouse, on the other. Equally incongruous—and perhaps the most astonishing aspect of the economic interpretation—is the strange fact that the perfectly legitimate interests of import-export trade and foreign investment have had vastly less influence on American foreign policy than would be reasonable or appropriate. Foreign economic policy is apparently still regarded by most Congressmen as a purely domestic matter; various forms of legislative protectionism are still a major, long-term menace to the strength, stability and well-being which our political policy seeks to promote among our Allies. In sum, the irrationality of American foreign economic policy remains one of the most serious obstacles to realization of our political objectives abroad.

The "legalistic" approach retains a formidable influence in the making of foreign policy. This potentially lethal fixation, which so dismally clouded the essential issues at stake in the protracted neutrality controversy, was by no means permanently squelched when neutrality passed into history with the war. This approach demands that, not only the general aims, but also the methods and tactics of foreign policy be minutely prescribed and rigidly fixed by statute. The general idea underlying this approach has deep and ramified roots in American soil; it is connected with the historical Anglo-American ideal of government under law. This principle is indisputably valid, and profoundly important to the preservation of liberty under law—that most cherished goal of political life.

It is easy to cite precedents for legislative enactment without regard to executive direction, of mandatory specific foreign policies. It is even easier, however, to demonstrate that the leading precedents for this form of Congressional initiative have been notable mainly for their unfortunate, if not disastrous, consequences. The nation was propelled into an unnecessary, unsuccessful, and unprofitable war with England through the assertion of this species of Congressional prerogative between 1807 and 1812—after Congress had almost succeeded in plunging simultaneously into war with France as well! Again, in 1898 it was not the President but Congress that impelled America into a morally unjustifiable conflict with Spain—and unleashed an emotional orgy of imperialism, the consequences of which it was neither prepared nor willing to face. The conjunction of "legalism" and Congressional initiative produced its culminating folly with the enactment of neutrality legislation in the 1930's. Supposititious Constitutional shackles were ceaselessly adduced in support of this policy. And some of the Congressmen who later professed to have reversed their original belief in the wisdom of this policy, continued nonetheless to support it, ostensibly on the sole ground of this specious "legalism." It is obvious, therefore, that the concept of the rule of law, like every great principle, is capable of being misconstrued and misapplied; and especially has this been true in connection with American foreign policy. Never had a greater mockery been made of the Founding Fathers than in the legislative tactics by which American foreign policy was torpedoed under cover of a constitutional smokescreen.

The framers of the Constitution surely never imagined that the notion of government under law would come to signify the legislative dictation of a mandatory foreign policy, nor that a statutory mechanism could be established, *a priori*, in place of practical human judgment in the conduct of diplomacy. They were, on the contrary, keenly aware of the need for reasonably broad discretion in the use of political powers, within the framework of *general* principles and procedures they had formulated. Certainly they knew: "That the circumstances that endanger the safety of nations are infinite, and for this reason no constitutional shackles can wisely be imposed on the power to which this care is committed. This power ought to be co-extensive with all the possible combinations of such circumstances; and ought to be under the same councils which are appointed to preside over the common defense" (*The Federalist*, No. 43).

Though there has been much contention against this view, even among erudite authorities, not even Jefferson himself, the most eminent and articulate of these critics, could in practice conduct his diplomacy other than according to this dictum. Though Mister Jefferson was professedly convinced that the Constitution conferred no authority for any transaction such as the Louisiana Purchase, President Jefferson was able to discover, in the light of circumstances he believed dangerous to the safety of the nation, that the Constitution did, after all, provided a power ". . . co-

extensive with all the possible combinations of such circumstances . . . ,” or at least with the *existing* combination of such circumstances.

Unless the lessons of history are to be ignored, the Hamiltonian concept of Executive primacy and initiative in the conduct of diplomacy must be accepted as sound; for in practice, there can be no substitute for Executive vigor, discretion and, occasionally, secrecy in the direction of foreign affairs. Yet, in despite of the theoretical adequacy of constitutional principles and precedents to cope with the problems of foreign affairs, the events of the past decades are not such as to engender complacency regarding the constitutional problems that have so seriously hobbled American diplomacy—problems for which no longe range solution has yet been adopted. However sound the general Hamiltonian position regarding the Executive role in foreign relations, it was affirmed in the Constitution only by its silences, and continues to be controverted. Partly as a result of this protracted controversy, there is a serious question as to the practical efficacy of existing institutional machinery for the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

History has amply vindicated the prescience of Hamilton's dictum, respecting the role of Congress in the conduct of foreign relations, that “the fluctuating, and . . . the multitudinous composition of that body, forbid us to expect in it those qualities that are essential to the proper execution of such a trust; . . . a steady and systematic adherence to the same views; . . . decision, secrecy and dispatch . . . ” (*The Federalist*, No. 43).

Yet, inasmuch as no policy can be successful without Legislative backing—and there is no real prospect of a constitutional revision that would alter this situation—it can only be hoped that, within the existing framework, there will be progressive and far-reaching transformation of the attitudes and habits that have wrecked American diplomacy in the past.

During the past few years a start has been made in this direction. The State Department and Foreign Service are no longer as financially undernourished as they were before 1940, though Congress remains noticeably more reluctant to lavish funds on these vital organs than on other federal agencies. (One reason for this is the fact that, unlike other Executive agencies, neither the State Department nor the Foreign Service contribute any “pork” to the congressional barrel, nor do they provide any of the patronage that individual Congressmen control in connection with Federal agencies in their localities.) Congressional leaders now obtain fuller information from the executive branch, not only through conferences with the Executive and Secretary of State, but also by means of direct transmission to congressional committees by regular liaison officials of the State Department. There is still much to be desired, however, in respect of official cooperation between the two branches of government; and there is as yet no wholly reliable method of providing Congress in its entirety with the information all its members should have regarding foreign policy.

Though the calibre of congressional deliberation has notably matured since the sobering experience of World War II, our Allies are still deeply disquieted by the apparent unpredictability of American leadership. The most accurate information, however well propagated, can still be discarded in Congress. If conduct is any criterion, it would appear that the individual Congressman still feels that he may publicly pursue his own private foreign policy or, at any rate, a policy calculated to elicit the ephemeral applause of his constituents rather than the gratitude of their unborn children. Friendly governments anxiously follow the fits and starts of legislative debate, and are kept on tenterhooks lest Congress succumb to the old delusions in their new, atomically streamlined forms. They repeatedly hear, for example, ominous hints of an imminent decision to "go it alone"; they can never be sure that Congress will not swallow a budget-paring, one-shot solution, possibly by embracing the atomic-push-button fallacy as a bargain-basement substitute for sound military preparedness to support their solemn commitments.

Other fallacies which seriously threaten to subvert American policy are the "Hemispheric Bastion" concept; "the McCarthy fallacy"—the notion that communist infiltration at home is the only enemy to be feared; and the "Leadership fallacy"—the craving for the strong man who will deliver the people from all concern as to the external menace.

In the final analysis, it is obviously not the Constitution that endangers the adequacy or continuity of foreign policy; the major menace is embodied in the institutional attitudes, the mentality, and the habits of the men who hold public office, and the voters who place them there. It was not constitutional propriety but budgetary pennypinching that so brusquely terminated Lend-Lease, thereby needlessly disrupting international adjustment to post-war conditions; not duty but partisanship (and perhaps the intrusion of Spencerian social statics) that impelled Congress to demolish a system of ration controls in utter disregard of the consequences that they would thereby heap still greater burdens on already stricken economies, and deprive already underfed peoples of a portion of their ration. No canon of the Constitution caused several hundred Congressmen to brush aside the dangers of inflation that were so clearly evident in the whole wage-price nexus; no legal provision made them persist in bleating insanely of the dangers of "deflation." No ordinance obliged them to strangle the Voice of America in 1947. No article or clause compels them to hack away so stubbornly at the foundation of sound import policy: the Reciprocal Trade Act.

It is only fair to emphasize that the post-war divagations of Capitol Hill have thus far been outweighed by the improved calibre of congressional deliberation noted above. It would be a gross distortion to deny that congressional dealings with foreign affairs have, on the whole, manifested a higher degree of enlightenment, consistency and moral responsibility during the past decade than at any period in the past fifty years.

But there is an uncomfortably large minority of Congressmen—including highly esteemed national figures—who will unhesitatingly exploit any popular fallacy whatever in order to implement their (often purely partisan) opposition to national foreign policies. Recently these gentlemen have sought to revitalize the popular myth that the Constitution was devised primarily for the purpose of repressing Executive powers—particularly in the realm of foreign relations. The force of this fixation had evidently been impaired by the war, for it could not prevent President Truman from committing the United States to the defense of Korea against communism. But constitutional pettifogging and budgetary pennypinching have proved to be the most serious obstacles that have thus far arisen to the implementation of our foreign commitments. The constitutional objection against Executive authority to deploy troops in Europe, pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty, has been strenuously urged in Congress—notably and most indefatigably so by Senator Taft; but despite this objection, the North Atlantic defense system has survived.

If American foreign policy is ever to become securely established however, if recognition of its real, long-term bases is ever to become rooted with sufficient firmness to permit the long-range planning that is essential to its success, it will be necessary to persevere in the far-reaching program of national education that has germinated since the war. Ignorance of history and of geography are probably the gravest of the educational defects to be overcome. The typical American may pass more years in school room and lecture hall than impoverished populations elsewhere, but his knowledge of geography—though greatly improved during the past decade—is still less than the level of a sixth grader. His ignorance of history is scarcely less appalling. Even his much vaunted knowledge of his own political institutions is more apparent to himself than to the informed observer.

Were it not for this pervasive ignorance of history and geography, Americans would probably be less inclined to clamor for the segregation of foreign policy from common sense; less inclined to the flattering illusion that their present system of military subsidies to foreign Allies stems primarily from altruistic good will, liberality, or desire to aid democracy-in-the-abstract. When this ignorance has been sufficiently remedied, Americans should be more inclined to understand that the foreign engagements into which they have entered are, generally speaking, quite compatible with the cultural and spiritual affinities that history has created between America and the rest of Christendom; and that these engagements were the necessary consequence of the power realities inherent in the course and outcome of the war.

One could wish, in view of the enormity and finality of the disaster that might follow a single false step, that the process of education were not so time-consuming. There still remains a dangerous gap between congressional response, on the one hand, and the mortal challenge that con-

fronts America, on the other. Support of American NATO forces in Europe has marked the furthest congressional advance toward closing this gap since 1945. Events seem to have accelerated faster than the American response since that time, while the equanimity of our Allies has been buffeted continuously by the nerve-wracking spectacle of widespread congressional agitation in favor of purely fiscal limits on the means of survival.

But there has been no loss of nerve here or abroad. There is no reason for fatalism regarding the future of American foreign policy; and there is no point in pessimism as to the basic intelligence and courage with which the American people will continue to respond to a challenge they have already accepted.

## *The Germantown Road*

• Claude F. Koch

The Germantown Road drops down and down,  
And under the trees of Germantown  
Age by age where our fathers strode  
We follow the fall of the old town road—

Who mounted it once, boys merry and quick,  
Merry and quick and larking the road,  
The road that's as gnarled as a tamarack stick—  
Who followed it up till our legs were bowed

And the silver maples flawed in the sun  
And down through the sky and one by one  
The stars fell sadly, as raindrops run  
Through the oak and the ash when the year is done.

*The Germantown Road drops down and down  
Bearing the weight of Germantown,  
Mask by mask of lover and clown  
Who once were boys in Germantown . . .*

Above the town the gas lamps hover,  
Now dusk is dust of ash on sleeves,  
The road dulls before us, and time is the drummer  
Of the feet that hurry the downward leaves.

## **Four Poems**

### ***Chaucer Professor***

"We shall begin a trip to Canterbury."  
His eyes above the book grow mildly dim.  
September: yet his heartlanes will to carry  
a surge of April to each wearied limb.  
He sees the pattern of a spirit leading  
unwary children to a lifelong school;  
and now by memory his soul is reading  
the lessons taught in Canterbury's rule.

A'Becket's shrine is household of his yearning,  
its hearth, the prodigal's warm pledge to Rome:  
today his footsteps quicken their returning  
from classroom aisle to roads that arrow home.  
Familiarly this autumn he will trace  
with Chaucer's timeless-bound the groove of grace.

### ***My Lord Comes***

Tomorrow You come  
From thundering Sion:  
All fear is mine,  
Lord my lion.

Today You come—  
How brave I am:  
Shy sacrament,  
Lord my lamb.

# **By Raymond Roseliep**

## ***Lilies of the Field***

We are the lilies of our Father's field,  
Yet neither have we toiled or spun  
Under the darkened moon and sun.

No dove has freed an olive twig to yield  
A hint of rain in other lands,  
Nor song of thrush baptized these sands.

But look! Across the wasted field God flings  
His shadow in a rain of light:  
Our Father gardens in the night  
And prods our sulky roots to burgeoning.

## ***Because of Light***

I have considered dawn  
making a golden lunge  
against the lock of night;  
daring, with poise, her plunge  
from sky to dreaming earth.

And now I search the passing  
faces for a bright  
credential of her mirth—  
I am that much aware  
of joy because of light.

# What is a Religious Novel?

• Sam Hynes

THOUGH CRITICS seem to agree that the phrase, "the religious novel," is useful and carries some meaning, they are clearly not sure of what that meaning is. Even in an article called "The Religious Novel" (*Commonweal*, Oct. 26, 1951), the author, Mr. Martin Turnell, chose not to define his term for us. He did, it is true, define "the religious novelist":

He is simply a writer whose vision is informed by definite beliefs. He has behind him a system which regards the individual as a soul to be saved or lost and which attaches immense importance to his least actions.

We are to assume, then, that a religious novel is a novel written by such a person. Proceeding on this assumption, we should identify *The Confidential Agent* and *The Loved One* as religious. But clearly there is something wrong here; religion has no place in either Waugh's baroques or Greene's "entertainments." Mr. Turnell skirted this difficulty by referring to such works as "in a lighter vein," but the question remains: what is a religious novel?

A religious novel is most obviously one in which the moral judgments which every work of art makes have reference to an established scale of religious values (Mr. Turnell's "definite beliefs"). But, and more important, it will focus on an issue which is fundamentally and completely a religious one—that is, the fate of man's soul, for there is no other "religious issue" worth considering. Within the framework of these values and this issue, the problems of the religious novelist as novelist are the problems of any serious writer: to dramatize his "issue," to particularize it in believable characters, and to propel those characters to a resolution which is acceptable in terms of motivation and circumstance. It is at those points at which religious values and issues affect these novelistic problems that the question of the religious novel becomes important.

First, the matter of values: it seems scarcely necessary to point out that the universal Christianity of the Middle Ages is no longer with us, and that this fact will influence the work of Christian artists; "we do not expect artists living in times of stress to possess the serene untroubled vision of a Dante or a Chaucer," to quote our Mr. Turnell once more. Overlooking the curious reading of *The Divine Comedy* and *The Canterbury Tales* implied here, let us pursue this point of lost universality a bit further.

The Christian novelist lives in a world which does not generally accept his system of values. Unless he writes for a Christian audience exclusively—and the serious artist cannot so limit himself—he is a minority spokesman in much the same way that G. B. Shaw was a minority

spokesman for Creative Evolution; and like Shaw he must establish his values before he can draw upon them. This can be done successfully, as anyone who has read *Man and Superman* knows; but it can also be done badly—witness *Back to Methuselah*. As a Christian correlative of the latter I would cite *The End of the Affair*, in which the fact and value of conversion are assumed. The result is a serious lacuna in the middle of an otherwise skillfully organized novel. The novelist who so assumes his values runs the risk, in a secular age, of obscurity as purely as Yeats did in drawing upon his private Vision.

I do not mean to suggest that the Christian novelist should write tracts instead of novels. In the good work of art, whether Christian or communist or vegetarian, the sub-structure of values will be contained in the work, and organic to it. (The weakness of *Back to Methuselah* is obviously its dependence on external explication.) I do mean that the judgments of action which a work of art makes must be comprehensible in terms of the work itself, and not in terms of beliefs external to it.

As examples on this point let us take two novels by Graham Greene, unquestionably the best religious novelist we have. Mr. Turnell called *The Power and the Glory* Greene's most successful novel, *The Heart of the Matter* his "least happy." I would reverse these evaluations.

*The Power and the Glory* depends for its effect on an intellectual and emotional realization on the part of the reader of the priest-man conflict in the protagonist's mind, and of his sense of the special powers of priesthood. These are special circumstances, having no correlatives in ordinary, secular experience. *The Power and the Glory* is a novel for Catholics; it assumes its values. It also focuses on an issue which is narrow and particular, and which cannot possibly be viewed as "universal."

*The Heart of the Matter* at first glance seems equally Catholic; its "issue" involves the Mass, confession, and communion. But at bottom the conflict is between pity and guilt, and these terms are universal. To the non-Catholic, the "secularist," Scobie's problem is real, and can be emotionally entered into, as that of the whiskey priest cannot. The latter may be, as has been asserted, an objective correlative for "nameless fears and the sense of being a hunted man"; but this is a correlation which only a Catholic can make. I would say, then, quite categorically, that a religious novel is good as a novel only when the "issue" works in non-religious, as well as in religious terms.

All this may suggest that the religious novel is a bad novel to the degree that it is religious. This is obviously not the case. Those fictional characters succeed best who matter most, and concern with the fate of a man's soul gives him an added dimension in which to matter. This concern in itself need not lead away from universality, since the question of religious salvation may stand in the secular mind as a metaphor, an objective correlative, if you like, for salvation in non-religious terms—for self-realization, or the resolution of the guilt complex. (This extension

may—probably will—be made by the religious reader as well.) But in the religious, as in the secular novel, it is the guilt (or the sin) which provides the conflict, and therefore makes the novel.

It was on this point that Mr. Turnell came most spectacularly to grief. He would have, in his religious novels, "charity, detachment and a balance in the portrayal of sin," with religion providing "a background of order"; he would have, that is to say, novels about contented Christians. But a religious novelist can no more write about happy men than can the secular writer. The happy man has no history; the happy Christian has no problem (at least in a novelistic sense). The drama of religion lies, as Milton discovered, in the damnation; heaven is occupied by people we do not know, hell by ourselves.

It is therefore inevitable that the Christian novelist should find his best materials among the Pinkys and Maurices and Scobies of the world, on the dark side of salvation. When he turns toward the light, as Greene does in the character of Sarah in *The End of the Affair*, he is likely to be blinded (Dante had the same trouble). Sarah has all the qualities of a saint, including incorporeality.

One final point: the relation of theology to fiction. Greene has been castigated for the "muddled theology" of *The Heart of the Matter*, referring, I take it, to the uncertainty concerning Scobie's eternal fate. Dogmatically speaking, Scobie dies in mortal sin, and we have the word of Mr. Evelyn Waugh that his soul is now in hell. But the point of Scobie's end is the uncertainty of it—the questions which destroy Scobie's life are not resolved by his death. The theology is muddled here, right enough. But for the believer who is also a writer there are surely adjustments to be made in both directions; art has dogma of a kind, too. Perhaps the only possible working solution is a balance between these two (often opposed) loyalties; it would be a curious balance which would demand meticulous fidelity on only one side of the scale.

## *Collage*

● Vincent D'Andrea

Eos, gadfly gallivanter,  
Gorgeous jujube,  
Hear:

Stonedogs are howling  
At a plaster moon

Enough

# Something About My Father

• Charles Angoff

ONE OF THE REMARKS about my father that has remained in my mind for some thirty-five years was made by my mother. The three of us went to a local function held in a grammar school not far from our home in Dorchester, a part of Boston, Massachusetts. My father arrived first, since he had first to do an errand in the neighborhood. My mother and I came later, and hence we sat a few rows behind him, but a bit to the side, so that we could see him. I noticed my mother looking in the general direction of my father, but I didn't attach any importance to that. She probably was trying to see who came to the function, I thought. But I soon learned that she had been looking at one person nearly all the time, for she said to me, "How sad your father is! Look at him, David. Why is he so sad?"

"I don't know," I said. I was about twelve years old at the time, and didn't know what else to say. I did, however, take a good look at my father, and he did look rather sad. Yet, I thought, that was pretty much the way he always looked, and I wondered why mother had noticed his looks for the first time only now.

"I don't understand," said mother quietly, and dropped the subject, as she patted my head.

That night, when the three of us came home, I took another look at my father, and observed once more that he didn't look any different

from any other time. He never did bubble over with mirth and merriment, and he was not given to telling funny stories the way the fathers of some of my friends were. But I wasn't troubled by that. Yet, my mother's remark had set me thinking about father. Indeed, her remark had revealed to me something about father that I hadn't noticed before—something that was an integral part of his character.

He was a gentle, unobtrusive man. He accepted what life had to offer him without complaint. He was a deeply orthodox Jew. "What it pleases the Uppermost to allot to us is for us to accept," he said. "If there are reasons for what is allotted us, only He knows them. Perhaps in the Other World He will reveal the reasons to us, but it is not for us here, the living, to inquire. From too much inquiry comes atheism." He belonged to the Chassidic sect of Judaism, a somewhat fanatical group, but he did so, it would seem, rather by inheritance than by conviction. The Chassidim believed in the ability of their *rebbe*s (religious leaders) to perform miracles, especially in the realm of healing, and they also believed that Judaism was a happy religion and hence Jews should sing and dance in their synagogues and houses of learning. In some ways they were a sort of Holy Roller sect. Yet my father was the most un-Chassidic Jew imaginable. He made light of the *rebbe*'s mira-

cles, and he thought it was unseemly for Jews to "carry on in the synagogues, like drunken Russian priests." He held that Judaism was a gentle religion, quiet and gracious and largely private between man and God. Occasionally, he went to a *shibbel* (where the *rebbe* held forth), but nearly always he came back with disappointment clearly all over his face. And another year or so went by before he would visit another *shibbel*.

Yet father was not a morose man. Rather he was shy and liked to give expression to his exuberance in a small group, or at home with his family, or, very often, all by himself. He was profoundly musical. "Ah," I heard him sometimes say, "what could be better than hearing a good cantor sing, especially with a good choir? What, really, could be better?" Sometimes he would visit a distant *shul* just to hear a new cantor, and he would come back with a detailed report. "Cantor Sirota is good," he would say. "Very good, really good. A strong voice, and he knows his Jewish tunes, every one of them. He knows. His *Shma Ysrael*, at *moosaaf*, is good. So is his *Ein Kalahaynou*. Oh, his voice booms through the *shul*. And yet, something is missing. For my part, I enjoy more the *chazan* at our *shul*. After all, praying is not shouting. Praying is praying. It is a quiet thing, a gracious, a calm thing, how shall I say it? Prayer is like a whisper, almost like a baby speaks, when falling asleep. Nu, probably I'm wrong. A *mayvin* (expert) I am not. I am only saying what I like."

Often I would hear my father sing softly, to himself of course, several prayers in the synagogue, along with the cantor, and a warm feeling used to go through me. My father seemed so much more sincere than the cantor, and I thought he had better control of his voice and knew the tunes better. Sometimes, after we came home, I would say to father, "I think you are a better cantor than the cantor."

My father would smile and say, "No, my son, the cantor is better. I just hum along. The cantor has a voice that is a voice. I am only a tailor who hums now and then."

"Well, I think you're better, father."

"No, my son. Our cantor is a good cantor."

I did learn later, from my mother, that as a younger man father did occasionally lead prayers in Russia, and that several people had suggested that he become a cantor. But, as mother said, "Why he didn't I don't know. I thought he had a good voice, too. Ah, he used to sing to me such lovely songs, and to you, too, David, when you were younger."

"Why doesn't he sing them more often now?" I asked. "He does once in a long, long time, all by himself, but he used to do it more often, mother."

Mother sighed. "I don't know, son, why," she said. "He has other things to think about, I suppose. After all, making a living is hard, even in so wonderful a country as America."

Sometimes, when I was in my middle teens, father would, in the

mid-afternoons of important Jewish holidays like Rosh Hashana or Passover, go off by himself in the front room (which was generally kept spick and span for company and into which we children were not allowed to go) and softly sing Yiddish and Russian and Hebrew songs. His singing would send a mystic thrill through me, and I would wonder what joys and sorrows and dreams and anxieties his singing hid, and I would wonder how he looked when he sang the same songs to my mother before I was born and when I was but a baby—and I would feel that the sweet sadness in his singing reflected not only the sweet sadness in his own life but in the lives of all Jews and all Christians and all creation—and the whole world would become a huge and warm and intricate mystery to me—and mankind would somehow get mixed up with the winds and the skies and the clouds and the oceans and I would become bewildered and bedazzled with the maze of eternity.

Father didn't have much interest in instrumental music. He made no distinction between orchestras and brass bands. "Ah," he would say, "such music is for soldiers and sailors. I heard plenty of that when I was in the Czar's Army, may he be eternally uncomfortable in his grave." I told him how much I enjoyed hearing the Boston Symphony Orchestra—I used to hear it from the twenty-five cent top gallery—and I also told him that I liked to hear the occasional band concerts on the Boston Common. "Nu," he said, "if you enjoy it, then enjoy it. It's

better than watching a baseball game."

For the violin he had a special love. He looked upon it as something not quite mechanical or even material. He was sure it had a soul of some sort; if not exactly a human soul, then surely "a spirit of a kind that we do not understand, for after all, you can hear a violin sigh and even cry, and no mere material thing can do that." He went further in his love for the violin. He claimed that whatever spirit it had was peculiarly Jewish. "When I hear a violin, I hear a cantor sing in *shul*. It is not like a *goyishke* drum or any of the vulgar brass instruments. Oh, no. It is a gracious and lovely thing. You ask how I know? All I can tell you is that I know. Real music sort of sighs for the sorrows of the world, and the violin, like I told you, does just that, so it is a gracious thing, and it has spirit, of that there can be no doubt. And when I say this I do not mean to be speaking atheistical talk, for only human beings have real souls. Still, spirits other things have, I mean things that are not human."

At the time one of the leading singers in America was Alma Gluck, Effrem Zimbalist's wife. She gave several recitals in Boston, and I asked my father to take me to some—in the twenty-five cent gallery, of course. But he was not interested. Women singers, to him, were unnatural and ridiculous sights. "Booh!" he once exclaimed. "What fine woman would get up in front of a lot of people and open her mouth wide and carry on? A woman should sing lullabies to her children

in her home. Singing in public is for men. In America everything is so strange. Women are getting wild here. They do everything that men do, and no good can come out of that."

There were popular songs that appealed to him, even though soldiers and sailors sang them. He especially liked *Alice Blue Gown*. "Now that," he said, "is a fine thing. Almost like a Jewish song, and I wouldn't be surprised that it is based on a Jewish tune. Nice and quiet and almost makes you cry." Several times I heard my father hum it to himself when he was alone in the front room. Sometimes he would also hum *Over There*, which was very popular during the World War.

But his most frequent musical exercise was making up tunes by himself in the front room. He would take an ancient religious melody and sing variations upon it, and both mother and I would be thrilled no end when we heard him do that. Then father would become, at least in my heart, like a little boy in the throes of adolescent sadness, and there would be something overwhelmingly appealing about his tunes—and about the thought of a grown man, with a family and troubles and laden with the glad-some burden of Jewish orthodoxy, singing away quietly all by himself within the hearing of his wife and his oldest son. I never spoke to him about this at any length. I don't think mother did either. But I know that this was one of the greatest pleasures that he gave to mother—and it is one of the most

precious memories of him that I have.

There was another enthusiasm my father had: he loved animals, which was a bit strange for an orthodox Jew. I do not mean that there is anything in orthodox Judaism that forbids the love of animals. Not at all. I only mean that most orthodox Jews I have known have not been outstanding lovers of animals. But my father was. When we still lived in the Boston slums he picked up a stray cat, and that cat remained with the family for about twelve years. We children, for some reason I don't remember, called the cat Shakespeare, and Shakespeare he remained as long as he lived. My father had complete charge of him—he fed him, he doctored him, and he some times took walks with him. And the cat seemed to know him and to love him. Often the cat would walk out of the house about six o'clock in the evening and wait around for father, and when he would see father he would rush up to him and snuggle against his leg. "Nu, a living thing after all," father would say. "Whatever lives knows things and feels things, far more so than human beings can ever realize."

Yet while father loved the cat he was also afraid of him, but only at night. Father always put the cat out at night. Father claimed that at night the cat turned into something fierce and dangerous. He said, "The night turns all cats into tigers, as you can well see when you look into a cat's eyes at night. It's a wholly different animal then. And at night a cat seems to be jealous of human beings—of their being hu-

man and nearer to God than the cat world is. A great *Chassid* once told this to my father, and I have never forgotten it." When I first heard this I smiled. My father reprimanded me. "Ah, my son," he said, "you smile, but what our great rabbis knew, you and your teachers will never know. They saw things with a seventh sense. And it will be years and years yet when your teachers and even professors will learn what the rabbis have known these hundreds of years. So remember what I told you. But . . . eh . . . you'll forget and you'll think you learned something strange and new when you hear it from your teachers. Nu, young people forget."

My father liked dogs only a little less than cats. He did get a dog for the house, and he quickly made peace between the dog and the cat, so that their friendship became the talk of the neighborhood. But after a while he had to let go of the dog. I am ashamed to relate that I was the reason for this. In short, I was afraid of the dog—and I have been afraid of dogs ever since. As a matter of fact, I didn't feel too comfortable with the cat either, but I could stand him. The dog, however, I couldn't stand. My father tried to teach me how to get along with him (I never had the courage to tell him outright that I would have been just as happy if he disposed of the cat, too), but I refused even to try to get along with the dog.

When the family economic status improved a bit and we moved into the "country"—that is, to Roxbury, a slightly less thickly populated section of Boston than the West End—

my father bought a couple of rabbits (a male and a female) for whom he built a little hut in our small patch of green that we called our yard. He seemed to know every one of their moods, he seemed to know precisely what they liked and didn't like, when they wanted to eat, when they wanted to be played with, when they wanted to be left alone. He let them lick him, and he let them play with his beard. "Such lovely little animals," he would say. "And to think that *goyim* eat them! Ah, how can they? Like eating little children!"

Unfortunately the rabbits weren't with us long. Father let them roam around the yard, and they caused enormous damage to the tomato plants that he had been so proud of. Ever since he had come to this country from Russia he had wanted to eat some fruit or vegetable that he had himself grown, and he planted tomatoes and string beans and peas. Only the tomatoes grew—but the rabbits undermined the vines. My father thought of having them "jailed" in their hut, but he didn't have it in his heart to do so. He would therefore let them out for a half hour or so in the morning, before he went to work, and for about two hours, when he returned from work. But even in that little time they raised havoc with the tomato plants. They also managed to burrow under the fence and run over to the adjoining yard, where they also caused damage. So early one evening he decided to get rid of the rabbits. He took them to the local station of the Boston Animal Rescue League, where he was as-

sured that they would be properly cared for.

The cat Shakespeare, however, was not enough for father. For a while he thought of getting a canary. "They look so pretty," he said. But he changed his mind. He decided that "jailing" a bird in a cage was a cruel thing. He said, "Every living thing should do as is ordained. Birds were ordained to fly, so they should fly."

Often he would take me on walks with him, and whenever we would pass a stable he would take me in and look lovingly at horses and stroke their sides and feel their necks and rub their noses. "Ah," he would exclaim, "a really aristocratic animal a horse is! So proud! Look at the way he holds his head." Father had dealt, in a very small way, in horses when he was in Russia, and knew a great deal about them. One of the tales he told me I still remember. "A horse," he said, "is in many ways like a human being. They are big and strong, but they have feelings like a man, even like a woman. In Kalenkevitch, where I come from, there was a big horse, and a Russian horse I want to tell you is a horse, really. Well, we noticed that he played with a little mouse in the stable. He didn't pounce on the little thing. He just moved it here and there like he was playing with it—oh, the way you would play with a ball. Well, a stable has to be cleaned out, of course, and mice and rats were eating up our grain and causing all kinds of damage. So we killed the mouse that the horse seemed to be playing with, and we thought nothing of it. Would you

believe it, the horse became morose, sick? Yes, really sick? He refused to eat, drank very little, and we could see that he was really sick. We wondered what was the trouble. We called in a peasant who knew about horses and he said he didn't know, he seemed all right. Another peasant said the same thing. And we got worried. Just about then, the grandmother of one of the peasants in our neighborhood came to see us, and we told her of our worries about the horse. She said, 'It could be that he is missing something, something you took away from him. Horses have feelings, you know.' Just at that minute it occurred to somebody that we had killed the mouse, and, to make a long story short, we got another mouse for him, and the horse began to play with it like he played with the other mouse, and he began to eat again and be himself again. So, you see, my son, horses are not just horses."

One evening, not long later, after father had fed Shakespeare, he said to me, as he was eating his own supper, "David, you noticed that I fed the cat before I sat down to eat myself. A great rabbi once said that a good Jew first feeds his dumb animals before he feeds himself. It is God's will that we be kind, not only to human beings, but also, and especially, to those of His creatures who cannot so well take care of themselves, and who are dependent upon human beings."

I have never forgotten this observation of my father's. It reveals a great deal about him, and explains why so many were drawn to him and liked to spend time with him.

## **The Theater in Philadelphia**

# **The Iceman Cometh, Sometimes Masked**

● Dan Rodden

THE "ICEMAN TRADE" is a categorical term developed some years back—I think by either Mencken or Nathan—to designate that segment of the public which comes to art for another purpose than the art experience. The Iceman's purpose is perhaps best indicated by saying that he constitutes the audience for French postcards, "party records," confession magazines, and—given the nod by sufficiently lurid advertising—the novels of Kathleen Winsor. Your average Iceman carries, not the honorable tongs of his profession, but a soft-pointed pencil with which he carefully marks out and isolates erotic passages in books borrowed from the Public Library. The designation "Iceman" is manifestly unfair; in this, the Age of Betty Furness, the profession of iceman (small "i") has virtually vanished, while the Trade flourishes, perhaps as never before. It should be clear, then, that I use the term metaphorically, and not with any intent of offending whatever icemen (small "i") are still hanging on by their tongs.

Mr. Al Rosen is the Apostle to the Iceman. Mr. Rosen is a theatrical producer who early in life discovered the Iceman Trade, and has gleefully paid it note. His most successful nod in the direction of the Iceman has been something entitled *Good Nite, Ladies*, which has been successfully playing Chicago and the other hinterlands for more years than it is encouraging to remember, and which invaded Philadelphia early in September.

*Good Nite, Ladies* has an interesting history. As *Ladies' Night* (note the archaic spelling) *in a Turkish Bath*, it was an Al Woods farce hit of the Twenties, and considered quite naughty. Its reputation attracted Mr. Rosen to it, some years later, but he discovered that its naughtiness needed considerable heightening if it were, indeed, to speak to *Our Times*. King Leer thereupon commissioned a re-writing job to be done, retaining the basic locale, so that the play might speak as eloquently to the Frigidaire Salesman as once it had spoken to the Iceman. His success is history, and *Good Nite, Ladies* opened the theatrical season hereabouts. It ran four weeks in Philadelphia, playing to ample houses. Some vestige of civic pride was restored when it was noted that the opus in question had played for that many years in Chicago. Sociologists will undoubtedly be more interested in this fact than I am. (Too late for present coverage comes the opening of *Maid in the Ozarks*, only rival to *Good Nite, Ladies* for the long-run favor of Chicago. Mr. Rosen's hand, though it is uncom-

mitted in this second violation, is reported active in its sponsorship. By all reports, it has, like its predecessor, been loosely adapted from hieroglyphics found scribbled on the walls of old Egyptian rest rooms.)

For altogether other reasons, I didn't go to see *The Suspects*, Agatha Christie's British-type murder mystery. I don't like British-type murder mysteries. I regard murder as a very serious business indeed, and I don't like people taking it calmly. I gathered, even from the complimentary reviews, that *The Suspects* embodies such attitudes (you know: "Is he—?" "Yes. Quite dead." "Hadn't we better call the Yard?") and I didn't go to see it.

**S**O MUCH for the plays I didn't see, at considerable saving. I had a reason, though, for discussing them. The writers responsible for *Good Nite, Ladies and Maid in the Ozarks* (Miss Christie is of no further interest to us) have at least this to be said for them: they have a point of view. I neither share nor approve their point of view, which is that of the French-postcard vendor, Dwight Fiske, *True Confessions Magazine*, and Kathleen Winsor. But they have a point of view.

I am not at all sure that as much can be said for Arthur Laurents and Moss Hart, whose plays I did see. These are men of talent, of sensitivity. Both of them are expert craftsmen. Either of them is capable of making what he has done seem acceptable in a theater, and susceptible to serious criticism. At present writing, Laurents' play *The Time of the Cuckoo* has gone on from Philadelphia to a mixed reception from the New York critics, and apparent success. Moss Hart's *The Climate of Eden* will most probably get a similar reaction. I did not like either play, and I suppose that I should say why.

It seems to me quite obvious, by this time in history, that it is possible for a great sinner to produce a great work of narrative art. Given certain circumstances, it may even be inevitable. But, I am beginning to be certain, a man who has no sense of sin—no matter how idealistic he may be, in humanitarian terms—cannot achieve the fullness of any art form which imitates the human act. Such a fullness must spring from the God-head of Good and Evil, full-armed with a positive point of view. And the writer who doesn't know good from evil is a color-blind motorist at a busy intersection; those of us who are in the cars behind have absolutely got to honk our horns in protest.

I find myself in a car behind Messrs. Laurents and Hart, honking for all I am worth. It is not that I do not recognize in them men of talent and good will. They would undoubtedly make charming neighbors, and are no doubt high on the lists of contributors toward splendid causes. In both *The Time of the Cuckoo* and *The Climate of Eden* you sense high purpose and benevolent intention. But it is simply not enough. I shall leave the moralists—who are panting and eager for the job—to account these plays as wicked. From my point of view, they are weak and disordered.

## **Contributors**

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